(a) whether it is a fact that Indian tourism market has suffered a loss in the last two years and a large number of tourists have been weaned away to nearby South East Asian countries;

(b) if so, whether any efforts have been made to find out the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details thereof and steps taken to attract foreign tourists?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) (a) and (b) There has been positive growth of 3.8% and 7.7% in foreign tourist arrivals in India during 1997 and 1996 respectively.

(c) Steps taken by the Government to attract more tourists include improvement of infrastructural facilities, strengthening of marketing efforts and sustained human resource development.

**Decline in Tourism**

2782. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA:
DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that tourism traffic to India is in a downwards direction;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government to increase the tourism traffic?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) (a) and (b) The tourist traffic during the first eleven months of the year 1998 registered a marginal decline of 0.6% as compared to corresponding period of the previous year. The decline is primarily due to economic crisis in South East Asian countries, general economic recession, fall in business tourists etc.

(c) Steps taken to increase the tourism traffic in the country include improvement of infrastructural facilities, strengthening of publicity and promotional efforts, human resource development, etc.

**International Tourist Centres**

2783. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what is the criteria to identify the centre for international tourism in the country;

(b) if so, the details and number of tourist centres State-wise; and

(c) whether there is a plan to include Kanyakumari as one of the international tourist centre?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) and (b) The Government does not have any system for declaring any place as an international tourist centre However, depending on the attraction and popularity of a place, the State Governments develop Tourist Centres and the Central Government extends fianancial assistance for such projects.

(c) Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu is one of the important tourist centres. The Ministry of Tourism has extended fiancial assistance for the following projects in Kanyakumari:—

1. Construction of 8 beach cottages
2. Cafetaria at Kanyakumari
3. Tourist amenities at bathing ghats
4. Ferry Launch
5. Floodlighting of Vivekananda Rock Memorial
6. Upgrading facilitites at the ITDC Unit
7. Beautification of Beach
8. A/C Units at Kanyakumari
9. View Tower at Kanyakumari
10. Ferry Launch Kanyakumari Vivekananda Rock Memorial